

# News Release



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## Boaters, Personal Watercraft Users Asked to Help Protect Lake Perris

RIVERSIDE – In an effort to improve water quality at the popular Lake Perris State Recreation Area east of Riverside, state and local officials are asking operators of boats including personal watercraft to begin using gasoline without the additive MTBE.

As part of the effort, the Tosco Corporation, owner of Union 76 station brand in California, has reached an agreement with distributor Beck Oil Inc. of Victorville to begin supplying non-MTBE gasoline to Volume Services America, operator of the Lake Perris Marina.

Non-MTBE fuel also is available at most Union 76 stations throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

MTBE (Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether) is a gasoline additive that can cause taste and odor problems when released into water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has identified it as a possible health concern. Tests at Lake Perris have found elevated levels of MTBE in the water.

“Our goal is to educate the boating public about the benefits of using non-MTBE gasoline for their watercraft,” said Gary Watts, Superintendent of the California State Parks’ Inland Empire District, which includes the Lake Perris State Recreation Area. “With a little cooperation, we can all help maintain Lake Perris as both a great recreation destination and as a drinking water source for Southern California.

“We want to give special thanks to Tosco for helping us in our important efforts now under way at Lake and commend Tosco for its leadership in the removal of MTBE from the majority of its California gasoline,” Watts said.

As part of the public education campaign, fliers will be handed out to boaters arriving at Lake Perris, asking them for cooperation in purchasing the non-MTBE fuel. Banners at the park entrance and billboards on routes into the park also will be part of the campaign.

Officials say the MTBE found in the water at Lake Perris is directly related to the number

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of boaters that use the popular reservoir. Carbureted two-stroke engines, the type found on many motorboats, discharge as much as 30 percent of their fuel unused into the water when in operation, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Spillage also contributes to the release of MTBE into water.

“We want to take action before the situation becomes more serious,” Watts said. “Our intent is to see a reduction in the levels of MTBE at Lake Perris, and we will be evaluating our efforts to see if they are successful.”

The public education campaign grew from ongoing discussions by a coalition of state and local agencies. The coalition consists of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Metropolitan Water District, the California Department of Water Resources, the California Department of Boating and Waterways, the California Department of Fish and Game and the Riverside County Health Department.

“MWD is committed to working with other concerned state and local agencies to develop a plan that balances recreation and water supply needs at Lake Perris,” said Ronald Gastelum, President and Chief Executive Officer of Metropolitan Water District.